THE INQUIRER

ORGAN OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY
AND FREE RELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP

ESTABLISHED IN 1842 REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER

No. 6038 Saturday, March 29, 1958 Price 3½d.

THAT RESOLUTION

A SUFFICIENT number of replies has now been received to the suggestion of *The Inquirer*, on March 15, "that at least one service in every Unitarian congregation" on the first Sunday in May, should be devoted to the "solemn concern in which mankind is now implicated", to make such a service possible. The word "solemn" perhaps is unnecessary. It suggests an association that need not belong to the concern—the concern being in its practical aspects the relationships between the East and the West and everything that rests upon them. There is no need to enlarge on that.

The suggestion arose out of the resolution that is being sponsored at the annual meetings of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches by 16 ministers. The resolution is printed on the back page of this issue. It asks for the Unitarian and Free Christian movement to pledge itself to certain purposes. A resolution of that kind with the word "pledge" attached to it is useless unless some sense of realism is given to the key word.

The Inquirer pointed out the difficulties of pledging in any realistic sense. The collective service was suggested as a means, in part, towards an awareness of this, and at the same time a dedication to the understanding of the new situation in which humanity finds itself. It is a new situation. It has only become apparent during the last two or three years. Great Powers can no longer go to war as Great Powers without the destruction of at least whole vast areas of civilization. At least. It would be well to listen to what certain scientists say about this. They emphasize the "at least".

This new situation is now obviously to be the permanent situation of mankind. The scientific age with all its miraculous powers of good or evil is upon us. Man cannot go to war on any extensive scale in this age without destruction comparable to the forces he wields.

The major problem of mankind now is war. Mankind either lives or dies by this. And the irony and the almost intolerable challenge of the situation lies in the fact that man can live as never before. For the first time he is presented with the certain opportunity of giving to every person on the entire globe the certainty of food, clothing and housing. The Golden Age has dawned: as far as that can be recognized in any material terms; mankind can march into it—if. Always that "if". If only he can be morally great and disciplined enough to march into it. Indeed, the situation goes deeper than morality. It goes to the very nature of religion. Morality can sometimes cheat. Man can be good within certain social situations which deny his moral greatness. Men can be morally great in war. There is nothing greater than the personal sacrifice of life for purposes seen to be greater than life itself. That takes place in war. But the situation of war tends to destroy all the greatness in it. It can weigh like a meaningless tragedy upon the spirit of man. It can be as terrible a superstition as the superstitions of the past in which men too were morally great. "Love," said Nietzsche, "is justice with seeing eyes". That is religion. Love penetrates where justice never can. Assuming that love can undertake the immense responsibility of taking the bandages from its eyes, and accepting the inner nature of religion of seeing with the imagination. Religion is not morality. It is something deeper and of greater power.

There is a certain immense drama in the situation. It is again the recurring situation of mankind brought to the edge of the Promised Land. Mankind can march into it, if only a new triumph of the spirit can visit him to enable him to do so. It is with this potential triumph that religion has to do. It exists within man; it challenges him with opportunity and wonder through everything he knows. It is with this potential triumph that religion has to exercise its power, and without willingness to do so it can become a self-centred cultus, or a personal escapism from the major challenges of human existence.

We want to be clear. Nothing is suggested here that is intended to bind anyone to any political standpoint, philosophy—pacifist or otherwise—or any "practical" solution. The resolution to be put before the General Assembly is attached to the document "A Call to Freedom". This document has come under criticism. Its underlying logic is pacifism, and to avoid this issue explicitly it had to resort to vagueness and emotional statements. The resolution itself contains it own tensions and emotional overtones. But it says something real and tries to point the way to action.

The Inquirer suggests that the resolution, if it leads the way to action, and if those who sponsor it can help in action, can be of service to the Unitarian movement.

There is no vagueness in attempted understanding, and to this those who feel the need can give themselves.

It is out of the giving that new insights and actions can arise. And it is from the giving that everyone can form his own opinions on practical issues.

FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING

"IS GOD A PERSON?"

By Arthur J. Long

A CORRESPONDENT in Bournemouth has invited me to deal with a question posed by her sixteen-year-old son: "Why do people personify God?"

This question probably reflects a widely felt uneasiness regarding what the philosophers call the theistic interpretation of the universe. Many people, while recognizing the absurdity of atheistic mechanism, are nevertheless unhappy about the suggestion that the power behind the universe is to be thought of as personal. To them, the whole idea of God as a HE rather than an IT appears to be nothing more than a naive anthropomorphism, appropriate perhaps for the nursery or the Sunday School, but hardly likely to commend itself to the intelligent thinker. It was the early Greek philosopher Xenophanes who said that if horses could speak, they would undoubtedly say that the Deity was like a horse, a notion which is paralleled in Rupert Brooke's charming poem *The Fish*. A similar attitude is also enshrined in the story of the cynic who said: "In the beginning, God created man in His own image—and ever since, man has been returning the compliment". Would it not be better, say the critics, to refrain from personifying God, and to speak only of a Life Force, a Supreme Being, a Power Not Ourselves, an Absolute, or an Ultimate Reality?

Now attractive as these notions sometimes seem, I am persuaded that the attitude they represent is quite mistaken. It always seems to me that a God who is not a person is not a God at all, and the hypothesis of a mysterious *impersonal* Power or Force behind all things, is, I believe, less intelligent than pure atheism. As B. H. Streeter points out in his book *Reality* (and his treatment of the question of personality in God can hardly be bettered) what we want is not less anthropomorphism, but more. "In olden days", he writes, "a crude anthropomorphism was a danger to be feared; in our age what the philosopher wants is the courage to advance further, and to advance more confidently, towards what, abandoning all shamefacedness, I will style the Higher Anthropomorphism".*

★

The case for regarding God as a person is in essence very simple. God, by definition, is the author and ground of the world-process. But what is the most significant event in that process? Undoubtedly the emergence of man, who, by all accounts, whether theistic, atheistic and agnostic, may be legitimately regarded as the consummation of the evolutionary scheme, the only creature in whom evolution is continuing. But man is clearly personal, and it does seem a little ridiculous to suggest that a Supreme Being should produce, through the evolutionary process, that which is qualitatively greater than itself. If man is personal, God also must be personal.

Admittedly, there are difficulties in the idea of God as a person. Some theists consider that it is more helpful to speak of personality *in* God, rather than to think of God as a *person*. But I am not quite sure what this is really intended to convey. Others try to avoid the difficulties by suggesting that we ought to think of God as "supra-personal". This is all right, so long as we really do take it to mean that God is more personal than we are. But as Streeter says, "If we refuse to call God personal, and consciously use words like 'supra-personal', we are pretty certain to end by thinking of Him as *impersonal*. . . . It is better to do a slight violence to language than to impoverish thought; it is preferable to expand the idea of personality rather than to contract our idea of God".† Many of the difficulties disappear, I think, if we cease to assume that to say that God is personal implies that God is a person like ourselves, finite, and imperfect. Baron von Hügel, the famous Roman Catholic philosopher, once said that "the obscurity of my life to my pet Pekinese may serve as some indication of the obscurity of the life of Deity to me". This seems perfectly reasonable—yet the obscurity of my life to my dog does not make me less of a person. On the contrary, it makes me more so. Streeter suggests that we ought to think of a plus element in the personality of God in relation to us, and a minus element of personality in us in relation to God, just as there is a plus element of personality in us as regards a dog, and a minus element in the dog in relation to us.

★

It may very well be that we must recognize the existence of an impersonal element as well as a personal element within the nature of God. W. H. Hocking says that this is one of the things which Christianity can learn from the religions of the East. But far from solving our problems, I think we only create new difficulties for ourselves, if we turn our backs on the profound insight of the Hebrews, for whom God was always the Living God, a real and concrete Person. In this, as in so much else, Jesus is true to his Hebrew antecedents. No one could have been more anthropomorphic than he was—but this is a reason for accepting rather than rejecting his teaching. As Streeter so aptly comments, once it is recognized that it is necessary for thought to conceive the power behind the universe as personal, the anthropomorphism of Jesus becomes far more intellectually acceptable than all the rationalized abstractions of our emancipated modern philosophers.

*B. H. Streeter: *Reality*, p. 133-4. †*Reality*, p. 140.

FROM MY JOURNAL

By "Simplicitas"

IT would be instructive to persuade one's congregation to write down the reason why they come to Chapel. Mrs. T. gave me her's when I called today to see whether she was ill. "No", she said, "I didn't come last week because that sermon you had advertised on 'Facing Death' would give me the willies. I come to Chapel to be cheered up". Well, well! I did my best to assure her that the most cheerful people are those who have come to terms with death, and I could give her examples from our own folk. But this morbid fear of death is, I am convinced, rooted away back in childhood when the hush hush of adults to keep a death from a youngster's knowledge produced this morbid fear. We have always talked openly about deaths known to our own children and answered their questions to the limits of our own understanding.

★

"Who's this?" met me as usual when I knocked this afternoon on the door of J.E.'s untidy room. "It's a long time since you've been", he grumbled. I gave my usual assurance that I never leave my lonely ones longer than a month. I settled down to lend a sympathetic ear to his half-hour's recital of his youthful prowess in Redville in the matter of billiards and of Redville Unitarians. As I at last edged my way to the door he ended with his usual parting words. "Don't be so long in coming next time, Mr. S. It's dull when you've only yourself for company". A savoury smell met me on old Mrs. R.'s attic floor. "It's just a bit of supper for poor old Mrs. Stansfield next door. She can't see to cook her own", she explained. She started to darn a baby's sock. "That belongs to him down there", she said. "His mother has enough to do and he comes in with me while she takes the eldest to the clinic". A curly head looked shyly round the door. "Come back in five minutes, Lee", she smiled. "I'll hear your tables then, and tell your Mum you can have some tea with me. Mr. S. has lots of real lovely folk to visit". As I took the hint, I mentioned old J.E. "He wants a bit of work to do", said Miss T. "Tell him to come round and chop some wood for old blind Mrs. Stansfield". I suppose my dismay at my errand was evident for she added, "Never mind. I'll send Sally with a note. I'll make him do it. I was brought up with Willy in Sunday School and I mind the time he lost his breeches on a school outing". I hadn't closed the door

before, in the manner of people much alone, she started talking softly to herself. "Fancy Johnny, and he once asked me to wed him!"

★

I think some men are born rebels. I've been visiting one tonight. What he did in his cradle I shall never know, but I can make a good guess. As soon as he was old enough to earn he rebelled against his parents and left home. An argument with a parson made him leave the church of his birth and join the Unitarians. For a few years he was happy, holding forth on every possible occasion about why he had left orthodoxy. Now that everyone has heard all too often about his rebellion he is looking for something else to rebel about. Unfortunately, he has picked upon our chapel organization, and I called tonight to try to put things right between him and our secretary Y. who was hurt by his "rebellious" comments upon our annual meeting procedure. After a strenuous hour I wondered as I walked home, will it ever occur to him to rebel against his own rebellious nature? It is the way that saints are made—and it has been known to happen!

CHURCHES, CHAPELS, AND MINISTERS—I.

ROSSLYN HILL CHAPEL, HAMPSTEAD, LONDON

(The annual service of the General Assembly will be held this year at Hampstead. This gives us the opportunity to begin a new series of articles with the above chief heading. The articles, with illustrations, will appear monthly.)

ROSSLYN HILL CHAPEL still retains something of the simplicity and quietness of the village church it was meant to be when erected in 1862 by a congregation that had been worshipping there since 1691. Somewhat secluded from the noise of traffic on the Hill, it is still graced by leafy trees in the summer. Inside, the Burne-Jones window, the Flaxman reliefs and the tablets to the memory of names that are still Unitarian "household-words" testify to the influences that have permeated its life within the last century.

The Past

The congregation worshipping at Rosslyn Hill Chapel has had its ups and downs, but it has always retained its independent outlook. It began as a dissenting congregation at the end of the 17th century, with the fiery Stephen Lobb preaching to it in his own house. (He was later imprisoned for his share in the plot to assassinate King Charles II.) Throughout the 18th century it was served by men of learning and ability. By the end of that century Hampstead was still a country hamlet, separated from the metropolis by miles of fields, with lonely places in which highwaymen often hid. Mr. Barbauld and his wife eked out their living by taking pupils. The life was essentially village-life, but refined and elegant, with long tea-drinking afternoons and Italian reading-parties at the Parsonage. But the dissenting spirit was still alive for Mr. Barbauld wielded a powerful pen in the cause of anti-slavery.

A new chapel was built in 1829 but sometimes the worshippers were as few as five, and it was seriously thought that the place would have to be closed. But the mighty city crept on. In 30 years the population of Hampstead had doubled, the roads became lined, the fields became fewer. The little sanctuary on the site of the present Hall became full, and in 1846 the Golden Age began with the appointment of Dr. Thomas Sadler, whose spirit and influence gave the congregation its distinctive outlook. He dissented from orthodoxy because it went beyond revealed things "into matters too high for mortals", and his dislike of theological or denominational labels was written into the Chapel's Trust Deed. Sixteen years later the present Chapel was erected and more than once had to be enlarged to cope with the demand for pews.

Since then it has been served, among others, by Brooke Herford, Henry Gow and Charles M. Wright. But two World Wars, the slump of the 1920's and the disappearance of Victorian Hampstead have meant that up till quite recently it had become impossible to heat and keep open the Chapel during the winter months and congregations of very small numbers would retreat to the Hall for morning service.

The Present

Rosslyn Hill Chapel now considers itself a church with a future again. There is a steady growth each year in its list of members, its attendance at services, its budget and its activities. All the premises are in good repair and the grounds under control. Tasteful, well-lit notice-boards with weekly change of type greet the stranger at the gates, and a warm, dignified, freshly-decorated interior greets him when he is attracted down the drive with its rockery of flowers.

The Chapel is frequently in the local "news", sometimes for its sermons, which have been printed in full or used for the editorial, sometimes for its orchestral concerts in the Chapel, or its original musical comedies, written, composed and performed by members of the congregation, sometimes for its Brains Trusts of experts on such subjects as "Religions of the World", "Death and Survival", or "Child Guidance".

The Chapel now takes pride in the charming bachelor-manse it has recently converted from part of the Hall premises; this is the headquarters of the two discussion groups which meet weekly to discuss such topics as "Christianity in the Modern World", "Modern Thinkers", or "Child Behaviour". These are immensely popular and involve members and minister in considerable preparation, for each group works systematically through some up-to-date book on its subject, each member has a copy, and sermons are devoted to the theme of that week's discussion.

General social fellowship is provided by many other activities also. In fact, Rosslyn Hill aims to provide its members with a balanced programme that caters for the "whole" man and woman.

The Future

The Hampstead that Rosslyn Hill now finds itself in is radically different from the Hampstead out of which it originally grew. Its future, therefore, will be radically different from its past.

In Hampstead there is a large "floating" population. Some are families, but most are individuals working in Lon-

ROSSLYN HILL CHAPEL

don and choosing Hampstead for its healthy atmosphere, its proximity to the Heath, its old-world charm, or its literary and artistic associations. Rosslyn Hill Chapel, therefore, is keenly aware of the intense loneliness from which "metropolitan man" suffers and of the damaging intellectual and emotional tensions to which he is subjected. This is the spiritual problem with which the Chapel, in view of its liberal tradition, believes it is uniquely fitted to deal. New occasions teach new duties, for which independence, freedom and a willingness to experiment are indispensable.

Churches dwindle and decay only when they cease to perform a spiritual function that the community surrounding them can understand and value. Rosslyn Hill Chapel will stand or fall by this criterion, and its fate may well serve as a guide, or warning, for our whole movement.

THE MINISTER

The Rev. Donald Priestley Maw was born in 1921. His father is the Rev. John Maw, late of Bury, now of Collompton, Devon. Mr. Maw began his university preparation for the ministry at Manchester University and the Unitarian College in 1940; this was broken by four years National Service, after which he resumed at M.U. and U.C.M. In 1950 he spent a year at the University College, London, and then went for a year to the University of Chicago.

He is regarded by his friends as a Humanist, but this is understood within the particular tradition of such a congregation as Rosslyn Hill. The tradition here is Christian-Unitarian and their minister is accepted with affection and response. Whatever else this means it evidently means growth, in more ways than one. Mr. Maw's energy and organizing ability is making a deep impression.

COMMENT

These Things Do Happen

TWO of the most unpleasant things I have been reading lately were an extract from the account by the Algerian, Alleg, of the tortures to which he was subjected by the representatives of the French forces in Algeria, and the comment thereon by Jean-Paul Sartre, one of the greatest contemporary French writers. They make very sad reading, for they concern the conduct of an army which is, as part of NATO, potentially, if not actually, one of the defenders of the "Western way of life". There have been whispers hitherto of the use of torture in Algeria, but after Sartre's exposure few Frenchmen can remain ignorant of what is being done in their name. As Sartre has pointed out: "Appalled, the French are discovering this terrible truth: that if nothing can protect a nation against itself, neither its traditions, nor its loyalties, and if 15 years are enough to transform victims into executioners, then its behaviour is no more than a matter of opportunity and occasion. Anybody, at any time, may equally find himself victim or executioner" (*Observer*, March 9, 1958). All this, no doubt, is largely the result of the preoccupation of Governments at Paris with the task of self-preservation; uncertainty of tenure brings flabbiness and irresponsibility into the control of the Army, and too much is left to the decision of the military leaders; but in the future the responsibility lies on the people of France themselves.

Freedom Needs Vigilance

The outbreak of torture by the French forces in Algeria gives point to Sir William Haley's insistence on the rights of public opinion in his Haldane Memorial Lecture at Birbeck College recently. He defined those rights as four freedoms—freedom of information, freedom of dissent, freedom from victimization, and freedom to exert influence. Sir William seems to have emphasized most of the first and the last of those freedoms. "All too often members of public boards, officials and others have to stay most silent when their own cause is at stake. . . . The mumb-jumbo words 'subjudice' are applied to all kinds of proceedings which are not in the remotest way legal, in order to stifle any expression of opinion about them". In the past there was a healthy, widespread and violent reaction against those things, but "now that the circle of their penetration has so immeasurably widened, they seem increasingly to be met with acquiescence or apathy". In commenting upon this lecture, the *Manchester Guardian* remarks that between August and October, 1956, a constant spate of rumour and reassurance was put out from Government sources, which had its effect in persuading editors not to tell the public how far the Government was moving towards a warlike policy—the more so when they were reluctant to do anything that might endanger the lives of British soldiers. Emerson was probably far more justified than he realized when he said that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, and in a democracy it seems true that the right to *know* is the most important sphere in which that vigilance should be applied.

Stories Good But Suspect

A cynic might be forgiven for thinking that one of the objects of modern historical writing is to discredit historical legends, interest in which made us feel so often that we know more about history than is actually the case. Only the other day I read that doubt has been cast on the truth of the story that when H. M. Stanley, as the correspondent of the *New York Herald* "found" Dr. Livingstone at Ujiji, his first greeting was, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" It appears that in Livingstone's letters to the Foreign Secretary of the day (to be seen in the museum of the Public Records Office in London) giving an account of the meeting, no evidence of such a greeting is given. It would be a pity if the story were discredited altogether for another excellent story was built on it dealing with the greeting of a visitor in the library of a famous Oxford college to the solitary white reader he found there, surrounded by a number of coloured students. Stanley, however, gives the story very clearly in his book, *How I Found Livingstone*, and the author of the most recent biography of Livingstone finds no reason to doubt its truth.

"Don't Announce Me"

There is another story, too, that is undergoing a revision—one that was told of "Lewis Carrol". It is to the effect that he was asked to a children's party at No. 47. By mistake he arrived at No. 48. "Don't announce me", he said to the servant, to whose astonishment he rushed upstairs, carrying a woolly hearthrug. Arriving at the drawing-room door he covered himself with it and, dropping on all fours, entered the room growling like a bear, only to find himself, not at a children's party but in the midst of a conference of serious-minded ladies engaged in the promotion of some reform or other. However, there seems in this case to be no question about what was done, but doubts of a serious nature are now thrown on the connection of Lewis Carrol with it, and the tendency seems to be to fasten it on to Dean Burgon, then the University Preacher at St. Mary's.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer", 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C. 1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

Life-Wish and Death-Wish

SIR,—The Rev. N. J. Teape's letter raises many complex issues. First, I agree that the teen-ager's freedom is limited more than the adult's by society, but this limitation is for his protection and not out of "malice". Teen-agers possess high ideals and insights, frequently dimmed in later life, but of necessity they lack experience. Adolescence is a time of rapid change and development, mental and physical, with considerable accompanying stress. It is not fair to leave the full burden of self-control in matters such as sex, drink and smoking to the teen-ager going through this difficult time. It must be a duty of the adult to give what guidance and advice they can (by tact, not prohibition) until the stresses ease and until experience of the consequences of excesses of various kinds have been gained.

I agree that those who cannot vote should not be conscripted and compulsory cadet corps at schools are entirely to be condemned. The more usual complaint about religious education today is the teacher's lack of conviction, not the reverse: moreover, "intellectual bullying and emotional cajoling" are evils we have to cope with at all ages.

Society's views and laws on sexual morals have developed because certain common standards of behaviour must obtain to make social life possible. I cannot tell what differences from the "adult sexual norm", Mr. Teape has in mind but the law usually acts as protector and young and old alike have the right to its protection, whether from middle-aged or teen-aged offenders. The exception, perhaps, is homosexuality, a problem (again in all age-groups) about which many people have little real knowledge and to which the Christian approach should be one of understanding and helpfulness rather than horrified revulsion.

The fact is that at no age can we have complete freedom. Some measure of conformity is essential because we are not isolated units but members of a community.

As to leadership, let us be realistic: certainly there will always be the teachers and the taught, the leaders and the led, as long as men are not all equally good and equally intelligent. Whether or not this is an evil and whether or not "domination" is involved, rests on the motives of those involved. Surely one of the qualities of the "entire and free person" is a desire to help others to attain the same wholeness of personality? In fact to become a teacher?

I agree we must set up no idols in our hearts; everything we hear from others, or experience, must be subjected to the criticism of reason and conscience. If these are the same as Mr. Teape's "fountain of truth in the heart", we are perhaps partly in agreement after all. I must, however, maintain that God reveals Himself not only directly to our "hearts" but also through many and various "teachers". As for "perfection", Mr. Teape and I clearly have irreconcilable conceptions of it so that further argument would be futile.

Let me speak plainly. What "disturbs" me is that one of our ministers should encourage our young people to look on their elders as their natural enemies, when what is desperately needed is more understanding, co-operation and toleration on both sides.—Yours,

London, N8. *Margaret Blathwayt Eynon.*

SIR,—Fire can be an excellent thing. Confined within the firebox of a locomotive, in a domestic fireplace, or even in a rubbish destructor, it is a most useful servant of mankind. But fire, running wild among the houses of a city, is a major calamity. Mr. Nicholas Teape's letter makes me wonder whether his undoubted fire might not be more useful if it were confined within some appreciation, not only of what is the fact, but also of the right of others to hold different opinions.

It is not a fact that "teddy-boys" and "gangsters" are new phenomena. The words may be of recent origin, but the realities they represent were known to Dickens more than a hundred years ago. Mr. Teape may regret certain features of public school education, but if those who run our schools think conscientiously that they provide the best training for citizenship, they are as much entitled to their opinion as he is.

It is not a fact that rules supported by the majority of people are, for that reason, necessarily wrong. Democracy means a way of life according to a "norm" set up by a majority of the people: we may think some majority decisions to be wrong, but have any of us any divine right to assume that his particular views are necessarily better? That was the line taken by Hitler and by Lenin in foisting their particular views on unwilling nations.

It is not a fact that ideas Mr. Teape describes as "Pre-Raphaelite" are utterly abandoned today. There are musicians today who still prefer Beethoven to "be-pop". In my own subject of science, it is not a fact that the views of Helmholtz and Kelvin are now held to be of no account: all that has happened is that they have been developed further by the discovery of new truths.

Finally, the urge to destroy the scheme of things entire, and then re-mould it nearer to the heart's desire, is not really very useful. The result, if such action could be successful, might be nearer to Mr. Teape's desire, but would it necessarily be nearer to anyone else's?—Yours,

Isleworth, Middlesex. *A. G. Tarrant.*

"A Call To Freedom"

SIR,—A leaflet with the title, "A Call to Freedom" has been carefully considered by the congregation of which I am Secretary, and I am asked to inform you that the congregation found difficulty in establishing the precise meaning of some of the key phrases employed. The article was felt to be abstruse and discussion was hampered by this. It was also felt that a resolution which was both vague and non-committal did more harm than good.

Deep divisions clearly existed between us as to what course of action might be advocated as an alternative to War and it was felt that this was one of the most difficult problems ever to face mankind, though we felt that negotiation and agreement with Russia to live and let live must play a very important part in our efforts.

All members agreed that as a contribution to mutual understanding between Russia and the West, one small practical step which could be taken would be to devote time and thought to learning about the Russian viewpoint on present-day problems and seeking to understand it. It was suggested that the General Assembly might lead in this by giving publicity to unbiased and authoritative opinion where such is available and by supplying background information on the development of Russia and Communism. Personal contact of any kind was felt to be the most fruitful approach of all.

Honorary Secretary, Unitarian Church, Bexley Green. *Colin S. Deuce.*

Mothering Sunday

SIR,—In *The Inquirer* for March 15 "Commentator" refers to "Mothering Sunday". He rejoices that it owes nothing to commercial motives but I am afraid it is beginning to be commercialized. I read of a clergyman who told the children of his congregation *not* to bring flowers for their mothers because of the racket in flower prices. The modern revival of the custom is believed by some to have started in America, but it surely has a much older basis in this country. I have never heard of its having anything to do with "Mother Church" but have always understood that it originated in the custom of allowing farm servants, who were engaged on a yearly basis at Autumn Fairs, to visit their mothers on this one Sunday in the year. This is borne out by the delightful "Mothering Sunday" Carol in the "Oxford Book of Carols". The custom has been in existence in the Midlands all my life and during my ministry at Stourbridge, it provided one of the most appreciated annual Services.

Freeman. *E. R. Lee.*

"Over There"

SIR,—If I may comment on Mr. Kemshall's "No Longer 'Over There'," the issue he seems to me to evade is the difference in kind of nuclear warfare from anything previously known.

Pledge if we will our lives, our children's lives even, with the unimaginable horrors of this latest method of extinction. But can it possibly be right to pledge the future of our race, the little ones clamouring to be born to whom life will be denied, or, to those who may be born, the bare human right to be born human, and not monstrous or blind or mindless?—Yours,

Beaconsfield. *Connie Bovard.*

The First Sunday in May

If you have not yet sent a card signifying the intention of the minister and congregation to hold some service on the first Sunday in May, with the intention suggested in "The Inquirer" of May 11, and intend to do so, please send at once.

THE LINDSEY PRESS

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

"What Unitarianism Means To Me. . . ."

Three numbers have just been issued to complete the series. These are:

No. 13—By a Doctor
No. 14—By a Solicitor
No. 15—By a Seaman

Previous issues were by a HOUSEWIFE AND MOTHER, a RESEARCH CHEMIST, a TEACHER, an AUTHOR, a MUSICIAN, a MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, a PUBLIC SERVANT, a FARMER, a SOCIAL WORKER, a BIOCHEMIST, a TRADE UNION OFFICIAL, a CHURCH WORKER.

price 2d. each, or the set post free 2s. 6d.

THE LINDSEY PRESS
15 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1

Death

Uren, D.M.—At Auckland, N.Z., suddenly, on February 26, 1958, Dorothy M. Uren (née Buckley), formerly of Leeds.

THE INQUIRER

All letters and manuscripts for the Editor must reach the Office not later than Monday morning for publication the same week. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

Subscription Rates: £1 3s. 10d. per annum (post free).

Those having any difficulty in obtaining copies of the paper should communicate direct with the publisher.

Address: 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.
TEL.: BUS. 7204 Editorial: EUS. 2952

NEWS REVIEW

A Request

SIR,—I am investigating the influence of hymn tunes upon the development of various denominations.

I would be pleased to hear from readers who may possess books of hymn tunes for which they have no further use and which they are willing to dispose of.

The condition and age of any such books are immaterial but I would ask potential donors to communicate with me before sending.

I shall, of course, be happy to refund any postal or similar expenses incurred in dispatch.

May I thank you in anticipation of the courtesy of your columns.

34 Queen's Drive, Fulwood,
Preston, Lancs. *W. Richardson.*

A Special Effort

In an attempt to make more widely known the Unitarian faith, and persuaded that members of the Chapel would appreciate the presentation in a deliberate way of the principles of Unitarianism, the Chapel Committee of Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford, and the minister, the Rev. Albert Smith, have planned a special effort to be spread over the next six months commencing in April. Every second Sunday a sermon will be preached on some main aspect of our Faith, for example, "Our Belief in God and Why", at an evening service and then repeated at a morning service each month. These services, and a short statement of what the Chapel exists for and the sermon subjects on Unitarianism, will be advertised monthly in the local Press. The interest and help of the members is being recruited in an appeal for their attendance at the services, in their being asked to talk about them and, particularly, in their bringing a friend along with them. Although previous efforts of a similar nature have been made it is felt by all concerned that in view of an increasing population, and the historical and theological standing of the Chapel a further effort should be attempted to make the public conscious of our existence.

Gateacre: The old Chapel was nearly filled by a large congregation of nearly 120 for the Mothering Sunday service. Many complete families were present, and children of all ages presented bunches of flowers to their mothers. Over 80 bunches were required, the Rose Queen presenting flowers to mothers whose children were not present. This heartening family service is a sign of our growing cause, whose membership has trebled in the past three years.

A Service That Was Different

Asked to take up a collection for Displaced Persons the JOHN FOUNDS MEMORIAL CHURCH PORTSMOUTH decided that the plight of these people should be the theme of a Service that was "different".

It began with an act of worship. A hymn, a reading and a prayer, but in place of the sermon was a One-Act Play. It was an integral part of the Service and was followed by the singing of "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind", silent prayers when the congregations were bidden to think of the compassion of Jesus, the benediction and the vesper: "God be in my Head and in my Understanding".

The play was "Displaced Persons", by Ursula Bloom, which takes as its theme the plight of these unfortunate victims of the war and and the plight of a displaced family on the first Christmas long ago. It is not a particularly good play and the players were very hurriedly got together but they were so good, and were so well directed that with the help of some effective lighting the theme came through very movingly.

The church, too, was comfortably full for the occasion, many perhaps drawn by curiosity and they were both reverent and generous. The collection of £9 18s. was sent to the Adoption Committee for Displaced Persons—specifically, to aid Mr. and Mrs. Iamurz and their four children.

And it was a real act of worship. Men and women were moved with compassion. Without words from a preacher they came to see beyond our world and its terror and to feel the power of abiding values. It was, indeed, a service that was different. It was different to have a full church.

LONDON DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of the London District and Provincial Assembly will be held at Stamford Street Chapel, S.E.1, on Saturday, April 26, 1958, at 3 p.m.

Nominations for the Honorary Officers and six representatives of the personal subscribers should be sent to the Secretary by April 5; notice of any resolution should be sent to the Secretary by April 12; and the names of the lay representatives of the churches and the deputies and the representatives of the Ministers' Fraternal and other affiliated societies, should be sent to the Secretary by April 19.

E. M. BUTCHER.

22 Sandridge Road,
Croydon.

Holiday Conference

HOLIDAY CONFERENCE at Manchester College, Oxford, Monday to Saturday, July 28 to August 2: "Unitarian Worship and Church-life". Conference in mornings, rest of day free. All ages. Inclusive charge, £5 10s. 0d. Write to the Principal.

Holidays Abroad

UNITARIAN "INNOCENTS ABROAD" INVITE YOU TO ENJOY FELLOWSHIP WITH THEM. French Riviera (June 16-27); Norway (July 12-24); Denmark-Sweden (August 12-22); Switzerland (August 18-29). Lone travellers welcome. Reduced fares. Nothing strenuous. Relax with fellow-Unitarians of all age-groups and from many churches, including American.—Rev. Parkinson, 4 Balmoral Road, Doncaster (Tel. 4775).

Miscellaneous

BIRMINGHAM. Schoolmaster (Unitarian), seeks comfortable room with board. Please reply Box No. 38.

THE CALENDAR OF THE CHURCHES

SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 1958

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

Annual Meetings
Conway Hall - London

(except where otherwise stated)

Tuesday, April 15th to Friday, April 18th

OUTLINE OF CHIEF EVENTS

TUESDAY, APRIL 15

2.00 p.m. SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING (Gordon Square).
4.30 p.m. INFORMAL RECEPTION (Hampstead).
7.00 p.m. ANNIVERSARY SERVICE (Hampstead).
Preacher: REV. W. J. CARTER, M.A.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

10.00 a.m. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AND ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING.
1.45 p.m. ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING CONTINUED.
5.30 p.m. UNION FOR SOCIAL SERVICE ANNUAL MEETING.
Speakers: MRS. A. D. MITCHELL.
MISS M. STEVENSON.
Subject: "The Work of the Department."
7.30 p.m. MEETING FOR WELSH-SPEAKING UNITARIANS (Highgate Unitarian Church).
7.45 p.m. YOUTH RALLY (open to all) (Bell Street Mission).

THURSDAY, APRIL 17

10.00 a.m. COMMUNION SERVICE (Gordon Square).
Preacher: REV. A. B. DOWNING, M.A., B.D.
11.15 a.m. ESSEX HALL LECTURE.
"Ancient Prophecy and Modern Crisis."
REV. F. KENWORTHY, M.A., B.D., Principal of Unitarian College, Manchester.
2.00 p.m. SECTIONAL MEETINGS (Women's League, Lay Preachers' Union and Men's League, and Ministers' Meeting).
7.30 p.m. EVENING MEETING. "Religious Education."
Chairman: MR. J. WILSON.
Speakers: REV. D. E. RICHARDS, B.A., B.D.
MR. P. J. SPENCER.
MR. W. H. LEWIS.
REV. C. H. BARTLETT, B.A.

FRIDAY, APRIL 18

10.00 a.m. FINAL SESSION. "Liberal Religion in Europe."
Chairman: REV. K. TWINN, M.A.
Speakers: DR. S. VAN DER WOUDE.
RT. REV. BISHOP STEPHEN FETHO.
PROFESSOR JOSEPH FERENCZ.
12 noon CLOSING ADDRESS. "Our Glorious Life."
REV. C. G. TOONE, M.A., B.D.

Resolutions at the Annual Business Meeting

In addition to routine resolutions the following will appear on the Agenda. Any minister or delegate desiring to put forward an amendment should send it without delay to the Secretary in writing with the name of the Seconder.

GENERAL RESOLUTION

WOMEN'S LEAGUE JUBILEE: "That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches offers its hearty congratulations to the British League of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women on the attainment of its Jubilee. It places on record its warm appreciation of the magnificent service rendered to our churches over this long period of fifty years which covers two World Wars and their aftermath. It recalls in particular the devoted services in many small causes of members of the League, without which such churches would find it difficult to maintain their witness to our Liberal faith. Believing that the women of our movement have a great contribution still to make in the strengthening of our congregations and the extension of our witness, it wishes the League much joy and happiness in the years to come, as it goes forward to enhance its already great tradition."
Miss Ruth Harford, President of the League, will reply.

RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY 16 MINISTERS

A CALL TO FREEDOM: "That whereas the Ministers and Congregations of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches have received and had opportunity to consider *A Call To Freedom*, the Ministers and Delegates here assembled affirm their conviction that the liberal faith of the Unitarian and Free Christian Movement has a duty to seek freedom from the fear which grips the world, as an invaluable contribution to the resolution of the issues of war and peace in this atomic age, and therefore pledge themselves, by self-examination and by careful study of these issues, to seek an alternative to war, and, God helping, vindicate their Christian faith in the love of God and the service of man."

CHATHAM CHURCH RESOLUTION

"That this Annual Meeting of Ministers and Delegates of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches confirms its conviction that nuclear power has made war an entirely new problem, which the present generation must solve or perish. It calls upon all Unitarians and Free Christians to pledge themselves, individually and collectively, to oppose by every means in their power the manufacture, testing and use of nuclear weapons, under any circumstances whatsoever, and calls upon H.M. Government to initiate forthwith unilateral nuclear disarmament."

15 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. John Kielty (Secretary).

SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The 124th Annual General Meeting will be held at DR. WILLIAMS' LIBRARY, 14 GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1, on Tuesday, April 15, beginning at 2 p.m.

On behalf of the Committee, the following resolution will be moved:

"That a candidate for the presidency of the Association should be already a subscribing member."

CHARITY OF TIMOTHY DEAN

(Founded by Will dated March, 1726, for poor Ministers and poor Widows of Ministers)

Applications to participate in the Charity are invited from eligible persons residing in the Counties of Chester (to which County preference must be given) and Lancaster.

Forms of application (to be returned by May 1) may be obtained from the:

REV. FRED COTTIER,
42 Windmill Lane, Reddish,
Stockport, Cheshire.

(Hon. Secretary of The Widows' Fund, the Committee of which comprises the Trustees of the Charity.)

ADVERTISEMENT RATES
Births, Marriages, Deaths, Changes of Address
2 lines, 6s. 6d. minimum. Each additional line, 2s. 6d.
Miscellaneous — Displayed
4d. per word, minimum 2s.
W. Heffer Sons Press Organisation Limited,
Gregory House, 103, Hatton, London, W.C.1.
Telephone: Chancery 6722
Display Rates on Application Special Terms for a Series

Printed by Waterlow and Sons Ltd., Queen Street, Southwark-on-Sea and Published by The Lindsey Publishing Co. Ltd., at the Inquirer Office, 14 Gordon Square, W.C.1. Subscription (Inclusive Rate) Overseas, Eire, £1 10s. per year